

[REDACTED]

23 September 2017

Dear Sirs

**RE: Warrington Preferred Development Plans**

I have recently been made aware of the plans for the development of Warrington and I am writing with my initial objections.

I moved to the area and started a family [REDACTED] years ago. Like you, I fell in love with the areas green open spaces which were a real contrast to the cities my wife and I commuted to each day. Whilst we always expected areas of South Warrington to be built on in future, 7,000 new homes seems somewhat excessive.

You will no doubt have received large number of emotive and hostile communications from concerned residents in relation to the Preferred Development Plan. Whilst I can completely empathise with my neighbours who are all hugely upset by the whole situation, I will try to remain more rational in my approach to these plans. I will however address the matters that concern me directly, and not the development plan as a whole.

**WBC**

Firstly, I would question the apparent underhand tactics used by WBC's planners consultation (or lack of it). Whilst I am not questioning if they have done all they are legally required to do, I would suggest that they have acted unethically.

Secondly, I would question how consultation of proposed plans is anything more than a paper exercise. If definitive plans we prepared, we would be able to make more relevant high level objections. Asking for comments at this stage of planning gives little option to prepare justifiable objections. I assume that we won't be given the opportunity to reply to definitive plans before a decision is made.

Anyone with a cynical view would suggest that the incentive of having more properties paying council tax, and being rewarded by the Government for building large numbers of new homes (regardless of if they are needed) is enough for WBC to want to push these plans through. It will after all be the house builders and their customers covering the majority of the costs. Developers will pay planning costs and community infrastructure levy's to WBC and corporation tax to the government. The Purchasers will pay stamp duty to the government and council tax to WBC, and the land owners will pay income tax or capital gains tax to the government.

**A Step Backwards**

It is my opinion that we should be looking forward to the next 25 years and not backwards. Installing more roads for motor vehicles to use seems illogical. If anything, we should be looking to develop more cycle paths and encourage people to not use their cars. The installation of an environmentally friendly tram system (perhaps using a renewal energy source) from Warrington to Altrincham and Manchester beyond that would be far more appealing to the residents of Warrington than more roads and more congestion.

With Liverpool and Manchester a stones throw away, Warrington does not need to become a city. This is in my opinion an unrealistic vision of grandeur or empire building by WBC. What Warrington could be is a forward thinking town with great connections to local Cities and huge opportunities for its residents both inside and outside of the town.

### **Losing Greenbelt**

I would like to question the number of residential units that have been will be built if the preferred plan proceeds. 7000 new homes can not be sustainable and I would be pleased to see any report that suggests otherwise.

Losing all of the country side between Grappenhall and Appleton Thorn can not be accepted. The environmental impact will be irreversible..

### **Housing and Employment**

South Warrington has in recent years become a relatively affluent area with average house prices £320k (according to Rightmove). Surely there isn't a market for a further 7000 homes in this price bracket over the next 25 years even with an aging population. If it is WBC's intention to integrate more affordable houses this will devalue the current properties and divide the community.

Furthermore, the proposal included increasing the size of Appleton Thorn Industrial Estate. If this area is developed, it is important the types of jobs matches the demographic and doesn't primarily employ low paid workers who would have to commute from areas of more affordable housing. This should be considered when trying to attract businesses to invest in the area and an industrial estate of science and industry would be far more suitable than logistical businesses such as Eddie Stobart who I believe already have plans to extend.

Generating 125,000 jobs in Warrington over the next 25 years is unrealistic, and setting the housing requirements around this would appear backwards.

### **Infrastructure**

Congestion is an issue, and Warrington has for many years needed a ring road. If there is ever an issue on the motorways, all traffic cuts through Warrington blocking all major roads. A ring road would alleviate every day traffic issues as well as helping to keep traffic flowing when there is problem on the motorway.

A Grappenhall and Thelwall bypass will simply take traffic to Bridgefoot more quickly which will compound the issues there. Having spoken with a lot of people about this development in recent weeks, it is apparent that the vast majority of cars that drive towards Bridgefoot from South Warrington are passing through town, and not stopping.

The development closest to us on [REDACTED] [REDACTED] is the proposed change of use of the Trans Pennine Trail. This is currently used by families throughout Grappenhall and Thelwall for recreational purposes (from a personal point of view, [REDACTED] my children learnt to ride their bikes on the trail and continue to use the trail knowing there is no danger from cars and busses). Developing this trail into a Bypass concerns me hugely. I don't wish to focus on the impact this will have on the price of our house, but it will be considerable and therefore worth noting.

Developing the Trans Pennine Trail into a roadway will no doubt be a large (and expensive) civil engineering undertaking for the seemingly single purpose of bypassing the Latchford swing bridge. In addition, if the trail needs to be widened, to support a road and associated pavements, there could be a need to purchase, or at the least hugely devalue in the region of 200 homes in Grappenhall, Thelwall and Latchford alone.

Finally, until a decision is made, it would be very difficult to sell any house near to the TPT and this is an unacceptable position for WBC to put homeowners in.

Yours sincerely

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